

News

United States
Department
of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Dallas, TX 75202

Dallas/Kansas City Regional Office
Jerome Watters
Regional Economist
(214) 767-6970
<http://www.bls.gov/ro6/home.htm>

**TRANSMISSION OF MATERIAL IN
THIS RELEASE IS EMBARGOED
UNTIL: 7:30 A.M. (CT),
Friday, February 21, 2003**

JANUARY 2003 CONSUMER PRICE INDEX DALLAS-FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Retail prices in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area edged up 0.2 percent during December/January, after registering a change of equal magnitude the previous bimonthly period, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. Regional Commissioner Bob Gaddie stated that higher costs were reported for five of the eight major categories, with housing serving as the largest factor in the rise. The Regional Commissioner noted that because these short-term changes are not adjusted for seasonal variation, consumers and businesses should be cautious in drawing conclusions about long-term retail price trends.

The Dallas-Fort Worth Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) was 174.0 (1982-84=100) in January, 2.0 percent above a year ago. The index registered an equivalent advance for the year ended in January 2002. Over-the-year declines in food and beverages, apparel, and other goods and services partially offset increases in the remaining major categories. The index means that a typical market basket of goods and services that cost \$100.00 for Dallas-Fort Worth consumers in 1982-84, cost \$174.00 in January.

Housing costs rose 0.7 percent during December/January, rebounding from two consecutive bimonthly declines. The shelter index moved up 1.2 percent and was primarily responsible for the rise in housing costs. Within shelter, a 1.4-percent advance in owners' equivalent rent (homeowners' costs) provided the impetus. Prices for utility natural gas increased 0.7 percent to contribute to the rise in the housing index. Lower electricity costs (down 0.6 percent) and household furnishings and operations prices (down 1.5 percent) partially countered the rise in the shelter and utility natural gas indexes. During the last twelve months, the housing index moved up 0.3 percent, the first yearly rise since May 2002. An annual increase of 1.4 percent in shelter was solely responsible for the 12-month advance in housing costs, as over-the-year declines were registered for electricity, utility natural gas, and household furnishings and operations.

Dallas-Fort Worth Consumer Price Index – January 2003 (Continued)

The index for education and communication rose 2.9 percent during the bimonthly period, its largest rise since the two months ended in September 2001, when it climbed 3.5 percent. Higher prices for local and long distance telephone service as well as computer software and accessories caused the advance. Over the year, the education and communication index advanced 4.2 percent.

Transportation costs rose for the third consecutive bimonthly period, advancing 0.3 percent in December/January. The index climbed 2.5 percent and 0.2 percent during the two months ended in November and September, respectively. Higher gasoline prices were the driving force as they moved up 4.4 percent during the current period. The average price for a gallon of gasoline in the Dallas-Fort Worth area was \$1.495 in January. Increased costs for automobile insurance also contributed to the rise. The current period increase in transportation costs was sufficient to move the index to a level 7.4 percent above January 2002, the largest over-the-year advance since the 12 months ended in July 2000 (9.9 percent).

Recreation and other goods and services also registered increases during the current bimonthly period. The index for recreation advanced 0.4 percent while the index for other goods and services edged up 0.1 percent. As in the October/November bimonthly period, higher prices for cable television were a primary factor in the rise of the recreation index. Increased costs for pet services and photographic equipment and supplies also contributed. For other goods and services, higher cigarette prices nudged the index upward. During the last 12 months, the index for other goods and services fell 1.5 percent, as lower priced personal care products more than offset higher priced tobacco products. In contrast, the recreation index rose 4.0 percent since January 2002.

The apparel index countered much of the increase registered in the other major categories. Clothing prices fell 5.7 percent during December/January, after declining 5.5 percent the previous bimonthly period. Lower prices were registered for many items, but particularly for women's apparel. Over the year, apparel prices decreased 4.5 percent.

The indexes for medical care and food and beverages both slipped 0.2 percent during the current period. The decline in medical care costs followed a 1.7-percent increase registered in October/November. Despite the current period decrease, medical care costs rose 6.3 percent over the last 12 months. For food and beverages, a 0.7-percent decline in prices for food away from home (restaurant food) coupled with a slight 0.1-percent decline in costs for food at home (grocery items) more than offset higher prices for alcoholic beverages (up 1.8 percent). Since January 2002, the food and beverages index retreated 0.3 percent.